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scientists at home and abroad as standard works of great value. The particular field of his investigations had previously been but little worked, but his labors have stimulated research in these very attractive by-paths of science. He will long be remembered by those who were his friends and correspondents, for his kindliness of heart, as well as for his conscientious care in the department of science to which he devoted the energies of his later years.

C. H. KAIN.

A Simple Point in Nomenclature.

In these later days it may be said that the "air is filled" with discussions on this perplexing subject, and we have all sorts of suggested reforms looking toward the ultimate stability of our plant-names. The Committee appointed by the American Association will undoubtedly give us a valuable set of working rules at the approaching Madison meeting, but while they are concerning themselves with the weightier problems, I take the liberty of calling to their attention a very small point upon which it would perhaps be well to have an authoritative ruling. This question is: When it is desired to question either of the members of a plant-name, where shall the question mark be placed? This seems a very trivial question, but, judging from the variation in its use, it is not properly appreciated.

Suppose for example that a botanist is working up a collection of plants and finds one which seems to be *Ranunculus aquatilis*, L., but the material is not sufficient to be positive. In a printed enumeration how will this doubt be expressed? The following forms [given as models] have all been abundantly observed: ? *Ranunculus aquatilis*, L.; *Ranunculus* ? *aquatilis*, L.; *Ranunculus aquatilis*? L.; *Ranunculus aquatilis*, L.?, with the further variation of placing them all in brackets.

If, as is ordinarily understood, the interrogation mark questions the word which it follows, we shall clearly have a state of affairs not only contradictory but not contemplated in many cases. In a great majority of instances it is probable that the intention is to question the species, but such indiscriminate use of the question mark can only lead to confusion, when it is remembered that there are at least three separate and distinct things which it is sometimes desirable to question. These are the genus, the species, and the authority. If it was always understood that the mark cast doubt upon the word which it immediately followed, it could be used with an exactness which it does not now admit of. Is it not worth while for the committee to formulate a rule which will embody the above facts? F. H. KNOWLTON.

U. S. NATIONAL MUSEUM, March 25, 1893.

[It would seem that the interrogation mark placed as in the first and fourth of Mr. Sudworth's models should indicate that the author is in doubt whether he is or is not referring to the *Ranunculus aquatilis* of Linnæus; placed as in the second model would indicate that doubt is thrown on *Ranunculus aquatilis* belonging in the genus *Ranunculus*, and would ordinarily only be employed in the first description of a plant. We see no particular application for the third method.—ED.]

Further Notes on American Species of Polygonum.

BY JOHN K. SMALL.

(PLATE CLVI.)

Since the publication of my Preliminary List of American Species of *Polygonum* in the BULLETIN of December, 1892, I have had an opportunity to examine and study, among other collections, those of the Geological and Natural History Survey of Canada and the California Academy of Sciences. The former is rich in specimens from the territory north of the United States, and the latter is remarkably well stocked with rare and interesting Western material, as well as some of the very scarce species from the Andes of South America.

The following notes and descriptions of new forms are the result of some observations on the different species recorded below. I also take occasion in this place to ask collectors, in whatever part of the country they may be, to gather all the forms of the genus under consideration that they may meet with during the coming season.

POLYGONUM SAWATCHENSE, n. sp. Annual; more or less scurfy or papillose throughout, of a dull green color; stem erect, striate, obscurely four-angled and four-winged below the ocreæ,